



**Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta  
Acmhainní Daonna**  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí,  
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',  
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Gary Gannon T.D.

20<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

**PQ 60358/22** To ask the Minister for Health the plans that are in place to improve the working conditions faced by occupational therapists; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Gary Gannon  
Last month, the Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI) found that over two thirds of occupational therapists experienced burnout as a result of their job in the past 12 months, with almost 50% considering leaving the profession.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

We are concerned to hear of the results of the survey and experiences of occupational therapists. Occupational therapists are a highly valued profession within our inter disciplinary teams. The HSE wants to grow, develop and retain our staff and occupational therapists as well as recruiting more occupational therapists into our services. The retention of all health and social care workers remains a key pillar on the resourcing strategy for the HSE, coupled with ambitious international recruitment to close the resourcing gap. The HSE has committed to a significant increase in the recruitment of health and social care staff to support the development of integrated care services as envisaged in Sláintecare and has built significant recruitment capacity across the services over the last 24 months.

The HSE seeks to be an employer of choice and offers significant opportunities for staff development and career progression. To this end, the HSE has implemented a number of innovative strategies to attract and retain health care workers both nationally and internationally. This includes the implementation of national processes to attract health and social care final year students prior to their graduation, together with the development of targeted resourcing strategies for grades that are particularly challenging to recruit internationally.

There are a number of supports available to staff that have been enhanced over the last 18 months in light of the incredible challenges they have faced. There is a dedicated workplace health and wellbeing unit that offers a range of support services and programmes specifically tailored for healthcare staff to help support our staff both physically and emotionally through this extremely challenging time and beyond.

In addition, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides confidential counselling support and a referral service for all staff with personal or work-related difficulties. Advice and guidance is also available to Managers to support them in managing staff welfare issues. The employee assistance service also provides formal structured support to groups of staff who have experienced stress as a result of a critical incident in the workplace.

I trust this clarifies and is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

**Marie O'Sullivan**  
National HR